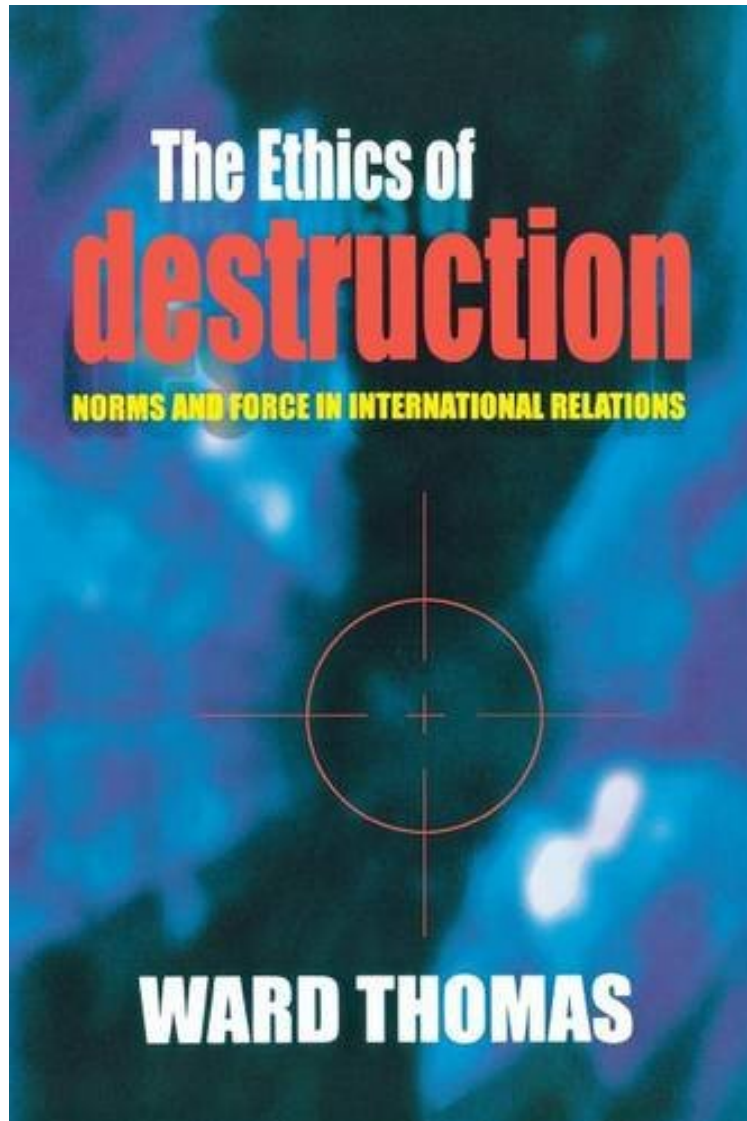


[Free pdf] The Ethics of Destruction: Norms and Force in International Relations (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)

## **The Ethics of Destruction: Norms and Force in International Relations (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)**

*Ward Thomas*

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**Ward Thomas : The Ethics of Destruction: Norms and Force in International Relations (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ethics of Destruction: Norms and Force in International Relations (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great bookBy Allen6868Great book and met my needs for school. It addresses ethical and moral dilemmas people face. It was an easy read and very informative.6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. One of the best recent books on norms and force in I.R.By Adam J. JonesThere are few works of international relations that have kept me up until 1 a.m., but Ward Thomas's excellent and immensely readable book is one of them. It provides both a general overview of the role of norms in international affairs, and detailed case-studies of norms governing assassinations of international leaders and aerial bombing of civilians. For undergraduate students, the first two chapters constitute an ideal introduction to the recent but very vigorous debate in I.R. over norms. To what extent do traditional "realist" formulations of power and influence need to be recast in the light of the norms literature? Thomas suggests that a fundamental rethinking is warranted, but he is careful to integrate the contributions of the realist and institutionalist schools, while offering his own novel "take" on some of the issues at hand. The two chapters exploring norms against aerial bombing of civilians (pre- and post-1945) are very well done, though the analysis of U.S. bombing in Indochina could have been expanded beyond the somewhat limited case of attacks against North Vietnam. Overall, "The Ethics of Destruction" makes an important contribution to one of the most vibrant discussions in I.R. today.6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful bookBy A CustomerWow, I thought this would be another dry, boring treatise on international relations but it got me hooked early with its trenchant analysis and clear writing style. Thomas, a notable young star in his field, has written the essential guide to norms of force in international relations. Highly relevant to today's body politic, this wonderfully-titled work is in my personal top ten.

Many assume that in international politics, and especially in war, "anything goes." Sherman famously declared war "is all hell." The implication behind the maxim is that in war there is no order, only chaos; no mercy, only cruelty; no restraint, only suffering.Ward Thomas finds that this "anything goes" view is demonstrably wrong. It neither reflects how most people talk about the use of force in international relations nor describes the way national leaders actually use military force. Events such as those in Europe during World War II, in the Persian Gulf War, and in Kosovo cannot be understood, he argues, until we realize that state behavior, even during wartime, is shaped by common understandings about what is ethically acceptable and unacceptable.Thomas makes extensive use of two casesthe assassination of foreign leaders and the aerial bombardment of civiliansto trace the relative influence of norms and interests. His insistence on interconnections between ethical principle and material power leads to a revised understanding of the role of normative factors in foreign policy and the ways in which power and interest shape the international system.

"It is often assumed that anything goes in war. This book joins other recent works to prove the opposite. Even in the throes of battle, Thomas points out, leaders and generals assess the use of force and incorporate common understandings of what is ethically acceptable."Foreign Affairs "Ward offers a timely analysis of the relationship between ethics and force in the international area. . . . The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Afghanistan war are not specifically mentioned, but the issues are so directly applicable that this work would fit nicely on a reading list for that subject. Ward writes so clearly that undergraduates through professionals in the field can profit from a reading."Choice "Ward Thomas sets himself the challenging task of finding some middle ground between what we might call 'rationalist' and 'reflectivist' accounts of the essence and function of norms in international policy. . . . A well-written, thought-provoking and ultimately impressive work."International Affairs "Ward Thomas attempts to bridge the science/ethics divide by demonstrating how ethical norms can become embedded and internalized by policymakers across countries and, as a result, play a crucial role in determining state behavior. . . . This work should be read and discussed among scholars of international politics and international ethics."Virginia Quarterly "This is an extremely well written book, which makes three vital contributions to the way we think about the ethics of force. First, in distinguishing between norms, laws and moral principles, it helps bridge the gap between theory and practice of ethics, explaining many seemingly intractable contradictions along the way. Second, it contributes greatly to our understanding of the way that norms, ethical and otherwise, are constructed in international society and how they change over time. Finally, the chapters on the norms behind bombing provide one of the most valuable and insightful accounts of the developing ethics of that particular form of warfare."Millennium "Elegant and wonderfully readable, The Ethics of Destruction has an intellectually honest way of engaging alternative formulations while providing convincing case studies. With this book, Ward Thomas has made significant contributions to our understanding of norms of violence in world politics."Richard Price, author of The Chemical Weapons Taboo "The originality of The Ethics of Destruction lies in Ward Thomas's important insight that when norms become truly internalized, they become 'embedded' in the policymaking process and thus 'hidden from view' in analyses of particular decisions. This well-researched book addresses a very old problem in the study of international relations in a way that will be of interest to scholars in that discipline as well as to international lawyers."Fernando R. Teson, author of A Philosophy of International Law